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ABSTRACT

This manual was written to encourage and aid Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and their affiliates to respond to the official English movement that is currently raging in the United States. It includes a copy of the 1987 "TESOL Resolution on Language Rights." Specific articles include: (1) "A Brief History of Language Restrictionism in the United States" (Thomas Ricento); (2) "A Chronology of the Official English Movement" (Jamie B. Draper and Martha Jimenez); (3) "Ten Official English Arguments and Counter-arguments" (Susan J. Dicker); (4) "What Individuals Can Do: Proactive and Reactive Projects for the Fight against the Official English Movement" (Susan J. Dicker); (5) "English Language Policy and the Community Affiliate Response to a Significant Current Issue" (Ruth Jackson); (6) "Official English Reading List" (Kathy Romstedt). An addendum to the Draper/Jimenez article updates the movement from 1991-1995. (Contains 28 references.) (NAV)

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Official English?

No!

TESOL's Recommendations for Countering the Official English Movement in the US

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TESOL Sociopolitical Concerns Committee

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Introduction

Sociologists tell us that conservative social movements tend to appear during times of economic and demographic change. These movements appeal to people who are struggling to maintain their power and status, and to those who are moving up the socioeconomic ladder but fear they may easily fall back down from where they came. Sociologists also say that a common target of people's frustration during times of change is the most recent immigrants, who are viewed as not conforming to the tradition of assimilation that previous immigrants readily adopted. Intolerance for immigrants is also likely to be exacerbated when they are people of color; racism is easily triggered when people feel insecure about themselves and their future.

It should be of no surprise to anyone that we are now in the midst of just such a period of change and insecurity. Nor should it surprise anyone that the modern official-English movement, which was born in the early 1980s and seemed to be weakening in the latter part of that decade, has again reared its ugly head. We are seeing renewed activity in many states. At the federal level, the new Congress has wasted little time in presenting bills to declare English the official language, to destroy bilingual education, to impose language requirements on citizenship, and to disenfranchize those who cannot read election ballots in English. The passage of Proposition 187, denying undocumented aliens access to education and health facilities and making state workers into INS informers, was a blow to the state of California, and we are likely to see similar federal legislation appear in the near future.

We at TESOL should be at the forefront of the fight against this destructive social movement. We are and have always been advocates for our students and their families, who are precisely the targets of the movement. In addition, the integrity of our profession is at stake, because the programs we teach in are jeopardized by this wave of nativism. With this in mind, this manual has been written to encourage and aid TESOLers and their affiliates in striking back at the official English movement. The authors hope that it will be used well, and used often, to fight the official English movement at every level of government. Together we must turn the tide of hatred around, and show those outside our profession that the ills of society will not be solved by making the already challenging lives of immigrants and language minorities even more difficult and devoid of human rights and dignity.

Susan J. Dicker
TESOL Sociopolitical Concerns Committee

TESOL Resolution on Language Rights

Whereas TESOL is an organization which promotes programs that provide speakers of other languages the opportunity to learn English; and

Whereas TESOL supports the study of other languages for native English speakers: and

Whereas in recognition of the right of all individuals to preserve and foster their linguistic and cultural origins, TESOL also supports learners of English maintaining their native tongues during and after their learning of English; and

Whereas these rights have been affirmed by such international organizations as UNESCO and the European Economic Community and in such international treaties as the Helsinki Accord; and

Whereas several states within the United States of America have enacted and other states and the United States Congress are considering legislative measures that could be used to deny these basic language rights; and

Whereas the considerable resources being spent to promote and implement English-only policies in the United States of America could be allocated more effectively for language instruction, including English as a second language, at all educational levels and within all educational settings;

Therefore Be It Resolved that TESOL support measures that protect the right of all individuals to preserve and foster their linguistic and cultural origins;

Be It Further Resolved that TESOL oppose all measures declaring English the official language of the United States of America or of any legally constituted part thereof; and

Finally Be It Resolved that TESOL circulate this resolution to its affiliates and interest sections, to other professional organizations and to appropriate public officials, especially those officials in localities where policies counter to the principles established in this resolution are being considered.

We in TESOL strongly believe that this resolution reaffirms the highest ideals and traditions of our profession as teachers of English to speakers of other languages—namely, that all individuals have the opportunity to acquire proficiency in English while maintaining their own language and culture.

1987 TESOL Convention
Miami Beach, Florida USA

A Brief History of Language Restrictionism in the United States

by Thomas Ricento

Introduction

The current movement to declare English the official language of the United States began in 1981 when the late Senator S. I. Hayakawa of California introduced a constitutional amendment (S.J. Res. 72) into the US Congress. The proposed amendment was never reported out of committee, but over the next decade, 18 states passed initiatives naming English as their official language. Hayakawa was no doubt a maverick, and dismissed by more "mainstream" politicians, but he helped spark a movement that continues to this day.

There are a number of reasons the official English movement picked up steam in the early 1980s. Ronald Reagan was elected President in 1980, ushering in a new era in domestic politics in which the "old," proud America, the "shining city on the hill", would replace an America mired in malaise, still paralyzed by the "Vietnam syndrome." The ethnic revival movement of the 1960s and 1970s, and federal support for so-called *bilingual education programs*, were being criticized by some in the popular press as divisive, and in the case of bilingual education, unnecessary and expensive. Nothing could be taken for granted anymore, so the argument went, even the preeminent status of the English language. With the dramatic increase in immigrants from Asian and Latin American countries beginning in 1965, many Americans, especially in large cities, felt their way of life was under assault. The sounds of Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Arabic, and many other languages were heard with increasing frequency in American towns and cities; the American border in the southwest was too porous; projections of demographic patterns showed that the older immigrant populations were not replacing themselves as quickly as were the newer, non-European groups. Amidst this uncertainty and relatively rapid increase in immigrant populations, English became a symbol, and its protection a cause around which disgruntled citizens could rally.

Certainly, a renewed commitment to "American" values was a central theme of the 1980s; and as in earlier periods of social change and international turmoil, reaffirmation of the status of the English language symbolized a desire to reassert the power of groups who felt their influence, their place, was being eclipsed by uncontrollable forces. During the colonial period, again in the 1830s with the first wave of large-scale European immigration, and during the great wave of European immigration from roughly 1880 to 1920, movements to restrict the public use of non-English languages led to the passage of English- only laws in education, voting, and the judicial system. The period immediately prior to, and during US participation in World War I, saw heightened anti-German hysteria, an assault on German organizations and publications, and an aversion to foreign cultures and ideas, generally. A similar phenomenon occurred during World War II, especially with regard to Japanese and German Americans.

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Although throughout US history most immigrants have traveled to America to start new lives and embrace opportunities in the "promised land," ethnic enclaves along the eastern seaboard and in other parts of the country often provided necessary cultural and linguistic linkages between the old and new worlds. Some immigrants objected to total assimilation if it meant renouncing native language and culture. Such attitudes helped fuel anti-foreigner hysteria prevalent in Americanization campaigns that sought absolute loyalty to so-called *American ideals*. It was around this time, in the early part of the 20th century, that the cleavage between those who championed total assimilation (the melting pot) and those who supported cultural pluralism (hyphenated Americans) first appeared. The effects of the Americanization campaign of this period, which led to the virtual elimination of not only bilingual German–English education, but also to a significant decrease in the number of students studying German as a foreign language in the schools, are felt to this day. It wasn't until a half century later, in 1965, that the federal government would fund any bilingual education programs, and even that funding had as its clear and only goal increasing fluency in English among limited English-speaking students in the southwest. The idea that being American meant giving up one's ancestral language and values was expressed by Theodore Roosevelt, in a message to the American Defense Society in 1919:

> for it is an outrage to discriminate against any such man because of creed or birthplace or origin. But this is predicated upon the man's becoming in very fact an American and nothing but an American. If he tries to keep segregated with men of his own origin and separated from the rest of America, then he isn't doing his part as an American...We have room for but one language here, and that is the English language, for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans, of American nationality, and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding–house. (Crawford, 1992, p. 59).

Of course, this discussion has thus far not addressed the status of involuntary immigrants—enslaved Africans—for whom assimilation was not a viable choice, or so-called colonized peoples, including Native Americans, Mexican Americans who were incorporated into the US as a result of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, Puerto Ricans who have lived between two cultures, and peoples in current and former US territories and protectorates, none of whom have had much, if any, say in language policy issues.

Despite disclaimers by supporters of official English, the indirect—if not direct—goal of English–only policies is to restrict the domains in which non-English languages can be used. Historically, where such restrictions have been implemented, they have effectively disenfranchised large numbers of immigrants from access to government services, voting, and equal educational opportunities. The reasons given in support of officializing English have varied over the years, depending on the circumstances, but common themes can be listed: to keep America "American" in the face of large-scale immigration; to safeguard national security in times of

war; to speed up the assimilation process for groups which seem to resist assimilation; to ensure the safety of workers (and sometimes as a recruitment tool for unions); to ensure public discourse does not break down. Yet, nothing in the proposed bills to make English the official language of the United States would address any of the hypothetical concerns listed above. Indeed, the fact that 95% of all Americans speak English all the time has done little to dissipate the widespread distrust of government and voter apathy which currently exists in the United States.

A Brief History of Language Restrictionism in the US

All nation states have mythologies about their origins, their special destiny, and their defining characteristics. The United States is no exception to this principle. At the time the US Constitution was drafted and ratified, many languages were spoken in the United States in addition to English, including German, Dutch, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, Greek, Yiddish, Arabic, as well as hundreds of American Indian languages and African-based creoles. Yet, in the *Federalist Papers*, John Jay characterized the nation as "one united people—a people descended from the same ancestors, *speaking the same language* [italics added], professing the same religion...very similar in their manners and customs" (Crawford, 1992, p. 32). This was the *idealized* America, envisaged by the prosperous elite who described a norm that excluded many Americans—the non-English, non-White, non-Protestant, and non-English-speaking. The fact that the America of 1787 encompassed many cultures and languages was not seen as relevant or problematic by the Founding Fathers. Such myopia was perhaps understandable in an era when African Americans were property and Native Americans were considered "heathen savages," neither group a part of the discussion. Although James Madison, again in the *Federalist Papers*, acknowledged that societies are divided into different sects and interests, he was probably not thinking of ethnic and linguistic groups. As James Crawford notes, "...in 1787 cultural pluralism was a *concept* [italics mine] yet to be invented" (1992, pp. 33-34).

However, the presence of non-English speakers (although of European background) did become an issue in certain sections of the country where their numbers created a noticeable presence, most notably with Germans in Pennsylvania. Benjamin Franklin worried that the German influence, if unchecked, would supersede Anglo supremacy, not only in language, but in terms of culture and political values. In a letter to Peter Collinson, a British member of parliament, dated May 9, 1753, Franklin proclaimed that "those [Germans] who come hither are generally the most ignorant Stupid Sort of their own Nation...and as few of the English understand the german Language, and so cannot address them either from the Press or Pulpit, 'tis almost impossible to remove any prejudices they once entertain" (Crawford, 1992, p. 19). Franklin was doubtful whether German immigrants would be capable of understanding the precepts of republican government laid down by the Founding Fathers. Similar fears were expressed by Thomas Jefferson in 1803 about the abilities of French-speakers in the Louisiana Territories to govern themselves. Franklin and Jefferson, among other colonial leaders, worried that immigrants from non-democratic countries, and especially from non-Protestant religious backgrounds, would bring monarchist views to the New World and might not easily embrace the tenets and responsibilities of constitutional democracy. It was further believed that the use of non-English languages would perpetuate foreign ideas and threaten civil society. Yet, German immigrants, although they established German-towns, maintained an active German language press, German cultural societies and clubs, were strong supporters of American independence, and fought and

died in the American Revolutionary War, many in German-language battalions. The articles of confederation were published in German and little was lost in the translation, apparently. Franklin's concerns about German ideas prevailing over English ideas, or about divided loyalties or opposition based on cultural or linguistic differences, were put to rest. Interestingly, as the German–American community assimilated and the Anglo conformity model was affirmed, Franklin softened his opposition and promoted the establishment of the first German-language institution of higher education in the US—Franklin & Marshall College.

Other immigrant groups were similarly discriminated against in the 19th and 20th centuries. A few further examples illustrate the pattern. Discrimination was usually based on differences in religion, race, cultural or social values, and beliefs. Language was often a convenient symbol under which racial or cultural discrimination could be subsumed. For example, the Know-Nothing Party, beginning in the 1850s, espoused anti-Catholic and anti- immigrant views which led to language restrictionist policies in California and other states. Chinese immigrants were attacked, barred from employment, disqualified from owning land, not allowed to vote due to English literacy requirements, and were not allowed to testify against Whites in court (Crawford, 1992, p. 47). In the 1880s, laws restricting the use of German in public and parochial schools were passed in Wisconsin (the Bennett Law) and Illinois (the Edwards Law). Although both laws were later repealed, the fundamental fear and distrust of cultural pluralism which informed those measures continues to motivate language restrictionist policies today.

The Americanization campaign of the early 20th century affected not only German speakers, but Japanese, Korean, and Chinese Americans, as well as Spanish speakers and other subjugated groups that resided in what was to become the United States before the arrival of Europeans in the 16th century. Attempts to prohibit the teaching of Japanese, Chinese, and Korean in private schools in California and Hawaii were voided by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in 1926, which also overturned laws prohibiting the teaching of other non-English languages in at least 22 other states (Tamura, 1993, pp. 44-45). In New Mexico, Spanish- speaking citizens resisted an English-only language policy, not only in the public schools, but for "all State officers and members of the State legislature" (Ricento, 1995, p. 42). Delegates to the 1910 constitutional convention passed antidiscrimination protections for Spanish speakers in voting and education, even allowing loopholes for provision of bilingual English-Spanish education (Crawford, 1992, pp. 52-53). Although many attempts to outlaw or restrict the use of non-English languages have been overturned by elections or court decisions, the cumulative effect on public attitudes has been profound. The unchallenged dominance of English is so unquestioned, that most Americans, when asked, assume that English is already the official language. It is further assumed that anyone in this country should speak English, and if they don't, there must be something the matter with that person. Americans also tend to expect that when they travel abroad, people in other countries will speak English.

The preeminence and vitality of English as the public language has never been challenged at any time in US history, including the present day. However, while most voluntary immigrants have been assimilated, members of indigenous groups, such as Native Americans, of involuntary immigrant groups, such as African Americans, and members of subjugated groups, such as Mexican, Cuban, and Puerto Rican Americans have suffered from long-standing, English-only assimilationist policies that have tended to undervalue, and hence undermine, their ancestral

languages and cultures, ultimately impeding the assimilation process. Speaking English was no guarantee of upward mobility for generations of members of these groups; today, many groups, including many Native American tribes, have realized that reestablishing and reconnecting to their cultural/linguistic roots is a necessary prerequisite to being valued by, and integrating with, the dominant society. Further, English-only really means *standard* English-only; speakers of non-standard varieties of English such as Black English, Chicano English, Indian English, and Appalachian English (to name a few) are also denied access to social and economic mobility by gate-keeping institutions such as schools, and by employers.

The Current Official English Movement

In the decades 1901 to 1910, and 1981 to 1990, more immigrants arrived in the U.S than in any other ten–year period since the census has been conducted (8,795,000 and 7,338,000, respectively). Is it merely a coincidence that in each of these periods, laws and initiatives were passed restricting the linguistic, and in some cases, civil rights of non-English speakers? In both periods, calls were made for restricting both the number and countries of origin of immigrants. Whereas in the earlier period, it was more acceptable to publicly deride the intelligence and values of certain groups, today pundits such as Patrick Buchanan and William F. Buckley, Jr. claim we should be more careful in whom we admit, because anyone would agree that, in the words of Buchanan, it is easier to acculturate someone from England than an African Zulu. Today, as in 1900, claims are being made about the inherent inferiority of some groups compared to others (refer to, for example, the recently published book *The Bell Curve* by R. J. Herrnstein and C. Murray, Free Press). It is well for us to recall that the earlier period of large-scale immigration prompted an interest in the newly developed "science" of IQ testing (imported from France and based on the work of Alfred Binet); it was found that certain groups (e.g.,'negroes' and persons from eastern and southern Europe) scored lower on these tests. In fact, based on tests administered by Henry Goddard in 1912, in English, it was found that 83% of the Jews, 80% of the Hungarians, 79% of the Italians, and 87% of the Russians who had recently arrived in the United States were "feeble-minded" (Kamin, 1977, p. 55). These "scientific" findings helped persuade the US Congress to pass the Johnson-Laird Immigration Act of 1924, which established national origin quotas of 2% of the number of foreign born already in the country as determined by the census of 1890, before the arrival of the "feeble-minded" immigrants. Today, as was the case nearly 100 years ago, large changes in population characteristics have led to somewhat predictable results. Politicians have seized on anti-immigrant prejudice to win elective office; in California, Governor Pete Wilson probably owed his reelection in 1994 to his support of Proposition 187, an initiative passed by California voters by a 3:2 margin, which would deprive undocumented aliens from receiving public education or services, except for emergency medical care. California voters also approved Proposition 63 in 1986 (77% of voters approved), which made English the official language of California. Some states are considering restricting benefits to legal immigrants as well.

As far as federal legislation is concerned, four official English bills were introduced in the 103rd Congress, three in the House of Representatives and one in the Senate. One of the House bills seeks to amend the US Constitution (H.J. RES 171); the other three are more narrow in focus. H.R. 123 would modify Title lV of the US Code, making English the official language of government; the bill offers no specific programs or funding to achieve its stated goals. A com-

panion bill, H.R. 124, provides incentives for employers to provide English language training for their non- or limited-English-speaking employees (it would do nothing for those who are unemployed, or whose employers choose not to provide English language training). Another bill, H.R. 739, introduced by Rep. Toby Roth (Republican, Wisconsin), establishes English as the preferred language of communication among all US citizens, "reforms" current naturalization requirements, and seeks to repeal all federal bilingual education and voting rights programs (Inman, 1994, p. 11). H.J. RES 171, introduced by Representative John Doolittle (Republican, California) would amend the US Constitution, requiring that English be used for all public acts, including every order, resolution, vote, or election, and for all records and judicial proceedings of the United States Government. Passage would require a two-thirds majority in both Houses of Congress, and ratification by three fourths of the states within 7 years of its submission. With the recent take-over of the 104th Congress by Republicans, the likelihood that one or all of these bills will be voted out of committee and debated on the floor of the Congress has increased significantly.

The first new "official English" legislation of th 104th Congress was introduced by Congressman King (Republican-New York) on February 21, 1995. Titled the "National Language Act of 1995," this legislation would: declare English the official language of the Government of the United States (all business, publications, income tax forms, and informational materials would be in English only, with four exceptions: for religious purposes; for training in foreign languages for international communication; for programs in schools designed to encourage students to learn foreign languages; or by persons over 62 years of age). It would also: terminate federal support of bilingual education programs by repealing the Bilingual Education Act of 1968; terminate the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA); repeal the bilingual voting requirements by repealing Section 4 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965; and amend the Immigration and Nationality Act (Section 337(d)), to read "All public ceremonies in which the oath of allegiance is administered pursuant to this section shall be conducted solely in the English language." This bill would repeal laws and policies that enhanced educational opportunities and allowed for greater access to the electoral process for language minority persons for the past 30 years. Its passage would only make matters worse for non-English speakers by doing nothing to improve their chances of acquiring English, while imposing greater social (and financial) costs on the general public. Lack of information in non-English languages for pregnant women, for example, will only increase the likelihood of higher medical costs for everyone; lack of multilingual ballots will mean an even greater non-participation rate of eligible voters who are non-English speakers; and abandoning federal support for bilingual education will result in pull-backs on the state level as well. As it is, only a small fraction (15%) of limited-English-proficient (LEP) children are in bilingual programs which receive federal support. If states reduce or eliminate entirely their support of bilingual education, the effect will likely be the reinstatement of the submersion "sink or swim" method, a well-documented failure.

US English

Since its inception in 1983, the political lobbying organization US English has spent millions of dollars—$28 million between 1983 and 1990 (Crawford, 1992, p. 4)—to promote the passage of a constitutional amendment, as well as federal and state laws, declaring English the official language of the United States (more recently, they have focussed their attention on making English the official language of government at all levels). Other groups with similar agendas include English First and the American Ethnic Coalition. In general, these groups warn that unless English is made the official language, nothing will prevent the US from devolving into a balkanized collection of ethnic collectivities, led by power-hungry ethnic leaders. These sorts of mindless scare tactics are effective with individuals already convinced that there are too many "undesirable" immigrants in the United States (or perhaps too many ethnic and racial minorities altogether). For other, more open-minded citizens, appeals are made with ads in national publications such as *The Atlantic Monthly* and *USA. Today*. In these ads, "ethnics" who have made it are pictured, usually busily at work at some prestigious job, proclaiming that "To make it in America, you need to speak my language" (i.e., English) (*The Atlantic Monthly*, December 1993). The person pictured has a Ph.D. from Columbia University "...involved in cutting edge genetics research—living proof that English is the key to opportunity in America." The ad goes on to state (rather deceptively) that US English supports projects "...that will ensure that all Americans have the chance to learn the language of equal opportunity." In fact, US English has spent precious little of its funds on English language education, and only began to do so when critics of the organization pointed out the hypocrisy of promoting English as the official language, while spending virtually nothing on English education. Certainly, foreign students studying for advanced degrees in American universities do not need to be convinced that English is necessary to achieve success. In fact, the entire US English approach is based on a totally false premise, i.e., that immigrants are resisting learning English. The real problem is that the vast majority of children needing English language instruction in the US are not receiving it. For example, in the 1990-91 school year, at least 521,000 limited-English-proficient (LEP) children needing English instruction did not receive any. Of the roughly 3 million school-age LEP children in the US in 1993, ***only 15*** percent were in federally funded bilingual programs (Winn-Bell Olsen, 1993) (Keep in mind that the goal of these so-called bilingual programs is to improve the English proficiency of LEP students so they can be mainstreamed into English-only classrooms as soon as possible.) In addition, thousands of adults are on waiting lists for available slots in overcrowded ESL programs across the country.

What is really behind the US English campaign? An examination of internal documents, funding sources, and written statements of leaders provides some of the answers. [A more detailed discussion of US English is provided in Crawford, 1992, pages 148-175.] The founder of US English, Michigan ophthalmologist John Tanton, has long been interested in restricting immigration to the US, particularly from countries south of the border. In 1979, he founded the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR), serving as chairman until 1987. US

English was a spin-off of FAIR, sharing personnel and funding sources, and a common ideology, namely, unless immigration of (largely) non-White groups is reduced, the United States could become a "majority minority" society by 2020. Although critics sensed an anti-immigration, and especially anti-Hispanic, agenda underlay the zero-population growth rhetoric of FAIR and US English, it was difficult to prove their case. However, the publication in the *Arizona Republic* of portions of a confidential internal memo written by Tanton in 1988 provided more than enough evidence that fear of a Hispanic takeover was very much on the mind of the group's founder. Tanton wrote, in part:

> Will the present majority peaceably hand over its political power to a group that is simply more fertile?....Can *homo contraceptivus* compete with *homo progenitiva* if borders aren't controlled?....Perhaps this is the first instance in which those with their pants up are going to get caught by those with their pants down!....As whites see their power and control over their lives declining, will they simply go quietly into the night? Or will there be an explosion? (Crawford, 1992, p. 151).

Questions about the intelligence and values of Latin American immigrants were also raised:

> Will Latin American migrants bring with them the tradition of the *mordida* (bribe), the lack of involvement in public affairs....Is assimilation a function of the educational and economic level of immigrants? If so, what are the consequences of having so many ill-educated people coming in to low paying jobs?....What are the differences in educability between Hispanics (with their 50 percent dropout rate) and Asiatics (with their excellent school records and long tradition of scholarship)?....(Crawford, 1992, p. 154).

Tanton also questioned whether the brand of Catholicism imported from Mexico would eventually threaten the doctrine of the separation of church and state. Revelation of the memo led to the resignations of US English President Linda Chávez and John Tanton, as well the resignation of Walter Cronkite from the US English advisory board. But that was not the end of the story.

Financial records of US English revealed that the organization had received $680,000 between 1982 and 1989 from the Pioneer Fund, an organization dedicated to "race betterment" through eugenics. The Fund was established in 1937 by Harry H. Laughlin, a consultant to the House Immigration Committee who had convinced Congress that eastern and southern Europeans were racially inferior to northern Europeans. Another contributor to US English was Cordelia Scaife May, an heiress to the Mellon fortune. In 1983, May's foundation contributed funds to distribute a controversial French novel, *The Camp of the Saints*, by Jean Raspail, in which third world refugees invade Europe. The book was praised by several US English leaders; Linda Chávez was appalled by the racist sentiments it expressed.

While these and other revelations concerning financial irregularities damaged the reputation of US English, the organization has rebounded, and continues to promote its agenda of officializ-

ing English and opposing bilingual education, multilingual ballots, and access to public services in non-English languages. The organization operates as a tax- exempt, charitable organization, even though it actively lobbies Congress and finances legislation-related activities. Further, it provides a relatively small portion of its annual income to promote adult English literacy, even though it claims in its promotional literature that it only wants to "...support efforts to enable all Americans to learn English—the language of equal opportunity" (cited in Crawford, 1992, p. 175). Who would oppose such an innocuous-sounding goal? Yet, making English the official language of the United States, or its government, would not enable anyone to learn English. The simplicity of the message, one which few Americans would question, accounts for the success US English has enjoyed, and for the fact that 19 states have adopted English as their official language, all but five since 1981 when the current movement, led by US English, began. However, removing bilingual ballots, enforcing English-only (submersion) education for all students, disallowing elected political officials from talking to their constituents in any language other than English, discontinuing public service announcements and important health and safety information in non-English languages, removal of non-English signs in public offices, withdrawing of public monies for non-English media services (the list goes on and on) would not be in *anyone's* interest. (For an extended discussion on the far-reaching effects such legislation would have, see Ricento, 1994.) Restricting access of citizens and non-citizens alike because of a language barrier is not only bad public policy, but an insult and a calculated provocation, the initial step to what would certainly be a protracted conflict between English and non-English speakers.

When one considers the historical record of the immigrant experience in the US, two pictures (at least) emerge. One is of the ethnic and linguistic richness that we all accept as part of the American story; ethnic food and music, the many Chinatowns and Little Italies, the heroes from the fields of sports, entertainment, and politics. The other is the pain experienced by many of being "different," of being an identifiable "ethnic," even after generations of residence in the United States. The indignity is even greater for African Americans, Native Americans, and Hispanic Americans whose ancestors predate the arrival of the more recent European groups. The ideal is that we can all become Americans; the reality is that it is easier for some than for others to be accepted as "American." The English language has often been used as a marker of one's "American-ness", and the use of non-English languages as a marker of one's "foreignness." Penalizing non-English speakers by limiting their access to public services, voting, and education is illogical, for it would *further* stigmatize non-English speakers, rather than help them acquire the language. If some Americans *choose* not to learn English, that will be punishment enough. To deliberately fortify the status of English by officializing it will merely add insult to injury for the vast majority of non-English speakers struggling to learn the language.

Everyone involved with English education should take it upon him- or herself to oppose official English legislation wherever and whenever possible. TESOL supports the notion of English-plus, that is, the right of all Americans to acquire English *in addition* to their native language (if it isn't English), not as a replacement for that language. For native English speakers, the learning of another language should be encouraged. Being bi- or multilingual is the norm in most countries. Monolingualism is a costly policy: undervaluing other languages, and by extension other cultures, does little to strengthen "American" culture. Languages are resources of great

political, economic, and strategic value, a view clearly not embraced by those who support the official English movement in the United States. But how about other countries? In 1986, US English published a survey of 161 constitutions from around the world , and reported that 64 designate an official language. What the report fails to mention is that of these 64 countries, all but 17 protect the rights of linguistic minorities by naming more than one official language, or by stipulating specific antidiscrimination guarantees. Perhaps most interesting is the fact that of the 14 countries that call English their official language, not one has named English its *sole* official language (Crawford, 1992, pp. 237-238). As Crawford notes, "in a world with approximately 160 national flags and some 6,000 languages, the odds weigh heavily against unilingualism" (1992, p. 238). Perhaps it is time that the United States caught up with the rest of the world.

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A Chronology of the Official English Movement

By Jamie B. Draper and Martha Jiménez

Not since the beginning of this century has language received as much attention in the United States. Like the language battles of the early 1900s, those of the 1980s were rife with appeals to patriotism and unity casting language minorities in the role of outsiders who deliberately "chose" not to learn the English language. But unlike the earlier period, when these issues were confined primarily to local and state arenas, the 1980s featured a campaign orchestrated at the national level by a powerful and highly funded lobby, US English. Ostensibly, the whole purpose of this organization is to establish English as the official language of the United States, but its connections to immigration restriction groups suggest a more far-reaching agenda. The irony of the appearance of the English Only movement in the 1980s is that it advocates a return to a mythic era of English monolingualism in the face of growing demands for multilingual abilities in the world marketplace.

At the beginning of the decade, states already had measures on the books declaring English to be their sole official language. Nebraska's constitutional amendment dated back to 1920, when the country was experiencing a wave of anti-German sentiment because of World War I. An Illinois statute, passed in 1969, amended a 1923 law which had declared "American" the state's official language. A third state, Hawaii, adopted a constitutional amendment in 1978 designating both English and Native Hawaiian as its official languages.

In 1979 the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies released its report on Americans' "scandalous" lack of foreign language ability Not one state had foreign language requirements for high-school graduation, and many did not even require schools to offer foreign language instruction. Meanwhile, bilingual education was coming under close scrutiny. Under the Bilingual Education Act of 1968, federal funding had been available for programs that maintained and developed languages other than English. But in 1978 Congress amended the law to emphasize the goal of competence in the English language and restricting support *transitional* programs only; no funds would be available for language maintenance. At the same time, federal civil rights authorities were aggressively enforcing the *Lau v. Nichols* ruling of the US Supreme Court, which established the right of limited-English-proficient students to special help in overcoming language barriers. Still, many school districts resented the federal insistence on bilingual instruction. The stage was set for a decade of debate on language in American society

1980

- Dade County, Florida, voters approve an "anti-bilingual ordinance" prohibiting the expenditure of public funds on the use of languages other than English. Fire safety information pamphlets in Spanish are prohibited, Spanish marriage ceremonies are halted, and public transportation signs in Spanish are removed.

1981

- Senator S. I. Hayakawa, Republican of California, introduces a constitutional English Language Amendment (S.J. Res. 72), the first proposal to declare English the nation's official language. The bill dies without Congressional action.
- The Virginia legislature declares English the state's official language and makes English the language of public instruction.

1982

- Senator Alan Simpson, Republican of Wyoming, introduces the first version of the Immigration Reform and Control Act (later known as the Simpson-Rodino bill). The measure would provide amnesty to illegal immigrants who have resided in the United States for a period of time and provide sanctions against employers who hire the undocumented. It passes the Senate, but goes nowhere in the House.

1983

- US English is founded by Senator Hayakawa and Dr. John Tanton, a Michigan ophthalmologist who also heads the Federation for American Immigration Reform.
- The California Committee for Ballots in English sponsors Proposition o in San Francisco, calling for an end to bilingual ballots. The measure passes with 63 percent of the vote.

1984

- New York State passes sweeping educational reforms, including foreign language requirements for all students. Nonnative English speakers may receive credit for proficiency in their native language.
- Indiana and Kentucky adopt English as their official state language; these measures amend sections of the law code dealing with state emblems.
- Tennessee declares English the "official and legal" language of the state. The statute further requires all official documents; communications, including ballots; and public instruction to be in English.
- An immigration bill passed by the US House of Representatives requires a "minimal understanding of ordinary English" to qualify for permanent residency under the amnesty program. The House and Senate fail to agree, however, on a final version of the legislation.
- The Senate Subcommittee on the Constitution holds hearings on S.J. Res. 167, an English Language Amendment sponsored by Senator Walter Huddleston, Democrat of Kentucky. Congress takes no further action on the measure.

- The Education for Economic Security Act becomes law, authorizing federal funding for the improvement of foreign language instruction.
- In extending the Bilingual Education Act through 1988, Congress creates several new programs. *Developmental* bilingual programs offer students an opportunity to maintain their native tongues after learning English; *academic excellence* programs replicate successful approaches in bilingual education; and *family English literacy* programs involve parents of limited-English-proficient children. A limited amount of funding (4 to 10 percent of program grants) is allowed for "special alternative instructional programs," or nonbilingual programs in which students' native language is not used.
- California voters approve Proposition 38, "Voting Materials in English Only," sponsored by Senator Hayakawa and other leaders of US English. The measure places California on record in opposition to the bilingual ballot provisions of the federal Voting Rights Act.

1985

- Secretary of Education William J. Bennett delivers a speech questioning the effectiveness of bilingual education over other methods, including the "sink or swim" approach. He calls for eliminating the requirement that schools use native-language instruction to qualify for most grants under the Bilingual Education Act.
- Responding to Bennett's speech, the Spanish-American League Against Discrimination coins the term *English Plus* in describing the goals and benefits of bilingual education.

  In a Miami survey, 98 percent of Hispanic parents say it is "essential for their children to read and write English perfectly" (as compared with 94 percent of Anglo parents). A Rand Corporation study reports that more than 90 percent of US-born Mexican Americans are proficient in English and more than half of their children are monolingual in English.

1986

- Two more lobbies for Official English are organized. English First, a project of the Committee to Protect the Family, is founded by Larry Pratt, a former Virginia state representative and president of Gun Owners of America. Lou Zaeske, of Bryan, Texas, organizes the American Ethnic Coalition "to prevent the division of America along language or ethnic lines."
- Congress finally passes the Immigration Reform and Control Act, including the English proficiency requirements for amnesty. Before final passage, a Senate-approved "sense of Congress" resolution declaring English to be the nation's official language is removed.
- Proposition 63 passes in California with 73 percent of the vote, the first Official English measure passed by ballot initiative. Included is a provision allowing anyone living or doing business in the state to sue state or local governments for actions that diminish or ignore "the role of English as the common language of the State of California."
- Norman Cousins resigns from the US English advisory board on learning that 40,000 people in Los Angeles are on waiting lists for English-as-a-second-language (E.S.L.) classes. He criticizes the "negative symbolic significance" of Proposition 63 and warns it could lead to discrimination against language minorities.

- The Georgia legislature passes a nonbinding resolution declaring English to be the state language.

1987

- Official English measures are considered in 37 state legislatures. They pass in five: Arkansas, Mississippi, North Carolina, North Dakota, and South Carolina.
- North Carolina mandates foreign language instruction for all students in kindergarten through the fifth grade.
- A Cultural Rights Amendment to the US Constitution, recognizing "the right of the people to preserve, foster, and promote their respective historic, linguistic, and cultural origins," is proposed by Senator John Breaux and Representative Jimmy Hayes (both Louisiana Democrats). Congress takes no action.
- Linda Chávez, former staff director of the US Commission on Civil Rights and director of public liaison in the Reagan White House, is hired as president of US English.
- The English Plus Information Clearinghouse (EPIC) is established in Washington, D.C. A coalition of education, civil rights, and ethnic advocacy organizations, EPIC seeks to centralize information on the Official English/English Only movement and respond to efforts to restrict language rights.

1988

- In *Gutiérrez v. Municipal Court*, a case striking down English-only rules in the workplace, the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals declares Proposition 63 to be "primarily symbolic."
- The House Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights holds hearings on five English Language Amendments proposed in the 100th Congress, but takes no further action.
- Congress passes an omnibus bill affecting elementary, secondary, and adult education. It increases to 25 percent the portion of Bilingual Education Act funds available for "alternative," nonbilingual programs. The new law authorizes aid for model foreign language programs at the elementary and secondary level and creates the English Literacy Grants Program to support adult E.S.L. instruction.
- An internal memorandum by Dr. John Tanton, the chairman of US English, surfaces in the press. It warns that Hispanic immigrants could be importing unwanted traits: "the tradition of the *mordida* (bribe)"; "low educability"; Catholicism, which could "pitch out the separation of church and state"; and high birthrates. Further investigation links Tanton's funding to a eugenics foundation and a distributor of nativist propaganda. These revelations prompt the resignations of Tanton and Linda Chávez as leaders of US English, and Walter Cronkite as a member of the group's advisory board.
- Voters pass Official English amendments to their state constitutions in Arizona (50.5 to 49.5 percent), Colorado (61 to 39 percent), and Florida (84 to 16 percent). Afterward, a rise in incidents of discrimination against minority language speakers is reported.

1989

- New Mexico becomes the first state to endorse the policy of English Plus. Washington and Oregon will soon follow suit with their own English Plus resolutions.
- Voters in Lowell, Massachusetts, approve a nonbinding resolution requesting their state legislature and the US Congress to declare English the official language.
- Defying a well-financed lobbying campaign by US English, the New York State Board of Regents votes to extend eligibility for bilingual education by raising the "exit criteria" for graduation from bilingual programs from the 23rd to the 40th percentile in English proficiency.

1990

- US District Judge Paul Rosenblatt strikes down Arizona's Official English amendment as unconstitutional. The measure's requirement that state officers and employees "act in English and no other language" is ruled to violate free speech guarantees under the First Amendment.
- Alabama voters, by a margin of 89 percent to 11 percent, adopt English as their official language. Official English measures have now passed in a total of 17 states.

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Addendum to "Chronology of the Official English Movement"

1991

- President George Bush signs the National Literacy Act, which in part promises increased funds for services to the limited-English proficient population.

1992

- Rhode Island endorses the policy of English Plus.

1993

- In *Garcia v. Spun Steak Company*, the Ninth Circuit Court reverses a lower court's decision that an employer's English-only rule violated Title VII of the Civil Rights Act. It finds that bilingual English- and Spanish-speaking workers were not unduly burdened by the rule since they could speak English fluently. The case has been appealed to the Supreme Court.
- Congress passes the National Security Education Act, for the purpose of providing American intelligence agencies and diplomatic posts with more personnel proficient in foreign languages. The Act provides scholarships for undergraduates to study abroad, grants to colleges and universities to improve cultural and language training, and fellowships for graduate students to study in other countries.
- The Languages for All Peoples Initiative is introduced in Congress. It declares English the official language of the government. It provides a tax credit for employers who offer English language training to their employees. Also included is a resolution recognizing the cultural importance of the many language spoken in the United States while warning of the potential of language diversity to foment societal discord and disintegration.
- The Amending the Immigration and Nationality Act is introduced in Congress. This bill requires that citizenship ceremonies be conducted exclusively in English.
- Governor Pedro Rosseló of Puerto Rico signs a law making Spanish and English the official languages of the commonwealth, an action which he hails as a step toward statehood.

1994

- An official-English bill is passed by the Georgia Senate, but discussion is stalled in the House and no action is taken.
- Governor William Donald Shaefer vetoes an official-English bill passed by the Maryland legislature.
- Governor Tom Carper vetoes an official-English bill passed by the Delaware legislature on advise from his Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, but indicates that he will sign a revised bill in the future.

- The Ninth Circuit Court upholds the decision for the plaintiff in Yniguez v. Mofford, which found Arizona's official-English amendment unconstitutional. US English's appeal fails.
- President Bill Clinton signs the Improving American Schools Act, which includes substantive support for bilingual instruction.
- Proposition 187 is passed in California. It denies undocumented aliens access to public health clinics, social services, and all levels of public education, and requires state employees to report suspected undocumented aliens to the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Law suits have delayed its enforcement.

1995

- Several new bills, variously titled the Language of Government Act, the Declaration of Official Language Act, and the National Language Act, are introduced in Congress.
- Three bills seeking to limit illegal and legal immigration and to limit immigrants' access to government services are introduced in Congress: the Immigration Accountability Act, the Immigration Moratorium Act, and the Immigrant Financial Responsibility and Sponsorship Act.

Ten Official English Arguments and Counter–arguments

By Susan J. Dicker

The myth of the melting-pot tradition

> The United States had a brilliant solution for the inherent fragility of a multiethnic society: the creation of a brand-new national identity, carried forward by individuals who, in forsaking old loyalties and joining to make new lives, melted away ethnic differences. Those intrepid Europeans....*wanted* to forget a horrid past and embrace a hopeful future....The point of America was not to preserve old cultures, but to forge a new *American* culture....[Today] a cult of ethnicity has arisen both among non-anglo Whites and among non-White minorities to denounce the idea of a melting pot, to challenge the concept of 'one people' and to protect, promote, and perpetuate separate ethnic and racial communities (Arthur Schlesinger, 1992).

This tradition exists only in people's minds. The European explorers who settled here tried as much as possible to live as they had lived at home. Instead of "melting away" ethnic differences, they subjugated the Indians and later the Black slaves they brought over to serve them. And they imposed their European culture on them. In Florida, where miscegenation produced the mestizo race, those of mixed ancestry who acquired the culture of the Spanish—in dress, in behavior, in language — were likely to do better socially and economically.

With each subsequent wave of immigration, newcomers have tried as much as possible to maintain their cultures. The Germans established German-speaking towns with German-language newspapers, churches, and schools; during the War for Independence there were all-German units under the command of German-speaking officers. What led to the death of the German culture was increased animosity toward new immigrants in the first decades of the twentieth century and the two World Wars that made Germany our enemy and therefore tainted everything German.

The tradition of American history is that immigrant cultures are maintained. It is only when an immigrant group appears to pose a threat to others that its desire to hold onto its culture is looked down on. So it is with the large numbers of impoverished people of color who have come to America recently: Hispanics, Haitians, Vietnamese. Note that the large number of Russians settling in Brighton Beach, Brooklyn have never come under attack; these immigrants are White and European.

The idea that ethnic and racial communities are the result of a "cult of ethnicity" ignores the role that racism plays in where and how people live. Minority groups usually live apart from Whites

because that's what Whites want. Minorities have been systematically segregated from society. Most minorities do not choose to live in economically depressed inner cities; they end up there because they can't afford to live elsewhere. Those minorities who have the means but who choose to live apart from the mainstream do so in part because they want to avoid the prejudice they know they will find in the mainstream.

The myth that the use of more than one language fosters divisiveness

> For the first time in our history, our nation is faced with the possibility of the kind of linguistic division that has torn apart Canada in recent years....Political differences become hardened and made immeasurably more difficult to resolve when they are accompanied by differences of language—and therefore conflicts of ethnic pride (Hayakawa, 1985).

Canada has been and always will be a bilingual nation. The separatist movement in Quebec in the 1970s resulted from the fact that the English-speaking contingent in that province, numerically small but economically and socially dominant, had eroded the rights of the French-speaking majority, abolishing the use of French in education and removing support for Catholic schools. The French were effectively marginalized in society, with most upper-level jobs in government and business held by anglophones. When the federal government restored the rights of francophones with the Official Languages Act, conditions improved for French speakers and the separatist movement died. So, bilingual policy helped restore peace rather than foment divisiveness. Today, if French is becoming so prominent in Quebec that English is endangered, causing discontent once again, it proves that a balance of language use needs to be maintained. Many Canadians also say that the reporting of the language issue and threats of secession are overblown in the press outside Canada.

The myth of immigrant resistance to learning English

> For the last fifteen years, we have experienced a growing resistance to the acceptance of our historic language, an antagonistic questioning of the melting pot philosophy that has traditionally helped speed newcomers into the American mainstream (Huddleston, 1983).

The best way to respond to this argument is with hard facts:

- In 1986, the year in which California passed an official-English law, the estimate of people on waiting lists for English classes in Los Angeles County was 40,000 (Ingam, 1986).
- In 1991, Gov. Pete Wilson of California vetoed plans to put $65 million of Federal money into English proficiency classes for immigrants newly legalized under the INS amnesty program; 2,500 Mexican Americans staged a protest march. Said one leader, "We want to participate in the economy of the greatest state in the nation" ("Immigrants," 1991).

- In 1989, a government-financed English language and employment service for immigrants and refugees in NYC served 3,000 (Howe, 1990).
- The NYS Division of Adult and Continuing Education Programs enrolled 69,200 adults in free English classes in 1990, up from 45,000 the previous year (Howe, 1990).

The contention that an official-English law will aid in the acquisition of English

> Having an official language will require government responsibility for providing more opportunities for immigrants to learn English ...*Without an official policy*, we can expect to see higher levels of unemployment among language minorities, more disparity between the positions employers wish to fill and workers seek to gain, and higher costs of remedial training and reeducation on the part of employers (de la Peña, 1991).

The official-English proposals that have been presented at the federal and state levels never required government to be responsible for providing opportunities for learning English. The closest such legislation has come is H. R. 124, part of the "Language for All Peoples Initiative" introduced in 1993. This bill amends the Internal Revenue Code to allow employers credit for 50% of expenses incurred in English language training for their employees. While this may give some employers an incentive to offer English instruction, it will not affect those immigrants most in need of help learning English: those who are unemployed and those who work in low-wage jobs which require no English. Employers of the latter group take advantage of the fact that their workers speak no English; this makes the workers dependent on their bosses, subject to exploitation, and unable to find better jobs elsewhere. These employers are unlikely to offer English classes, regardless of the tax credit.

US English itself does not have a record of urging such responsibility on the federal government. In fact, US English failed to support a 1986 bill calling for more federal subsidies for adult ESL instruction (the bill passed anyway). In its Winter 1994 newsletter, *US English Update*, the organization reported that its US English Foundation, whose mission is to promote opportunities for immigrants to learn English, awarded $2,000, space heaters, and two used computers to "Casa del Pueblo," a Washington, DC organization that provides English instruction, and $5,000 to "Project Citizenship" in Santa Cruz, money that would pay for 12 part-time teachers and basic teaching materials for 550 students. Compared to what the organization spends on lobbying at the state and and national levels, these contributions are a drop in the bucket: Califa (1991b) reports that US English spends between 1% and 7% of its budget on literacy programs. Also, as can be seen in the case of California, passage of an official English law does not automatically increase accessibility to English education.

The supposed threat of other languages to English

> Foreign languages are useful, and we should teach more of them. But they are *foreign* languages, not *coequals*. They don't have the same relevance or history, and they are not replacements for English (Keyser, 1986.)

One of the central arguments of the official-English movement is that other languages pose a threat to English. One way to answer this is to focus on the meaning of bilingualism. Many opponents of bilingualism actually interpret it as the sole or major use of a language other than English, rather than the use of two languages. This has never been the intent of immigrants who, we have seen above, are eager to learn and use English. To prove the advantages of bilingualism, it is helpful to give examples of people who are actually bilingual: those who can choose one of two languages depending on the appropriateness of the situation. Also, there is substantial evidence that English is much more of a threat to other languages than other languages are to English. Sontag (1993) reports on a recent study of 5,000 eighth and ninth grade immigrant students of Cuban, Haitian, Filipino, Mexican, and Vietnamese heritage. A large percentage of these students admitted to preferring English over their native languages. One can also point to the dominance of English on a world wide basis: English has 300 million native speakers, is used as an additional language by just as many native speakers of other languages, is used in an official capacity in roughly forty countries, and is studied by a huge number of native speakers of other languages all over the world (Wolfson, 1989).

The contention that bilingual services prevent immigrants from learning English

> [The] Hispanic leadership [does not] seem to be alarmed that large populations of Mexican Americans, Cubans, and Puerto Ricans do not speak English and have no intentions of learning. Hispanic spokesmen rejoice when still another concession is made to the Spanish-speaking public, such as the Spanish-language Yellow Pages telephone directory now available in Los Angeles (Hayakawa, 1985, 1992).

This statement is contradicted by a large body of evidence showing that Spanish speakers are and have always been learning English at a rapid rate (see Veltman 1983, 1988). In talking about bilingual services, it is important to create a picture of the immigrant population not as homogeneous but heterogeneous in regard to individuals' abilities to speak English. Some are newly arrived; some have been here for a while but have not had the opportunity to study English; some are in the process of studying English formally; some are trying to learn English but are not progressing; some are isolated due to age, infirmity, or other circumstances, and as a consequence have no access to English classes or to people with whom they could practice the language. Bilingual services make sure that all the constituents of an immigrant population have access to a minimum amount of services, whether they need such services temporarily or permanently.

And they are minimum; immigrants know that their full participation in American society depends on their ability to speak English. No one wants to rely on their own language or on translators all the time. Rimer (1992) gives a sympathetic portrait of students in an adult ESL class in Brooklyn, New York. One student claims as one of her triumphs that she can now go to the doctor's office, the store, or her children's school without bringing along her nephew s a translator. She also regrets that, several years before, she didn't know enough English to stand up to the American factory boss who had laid her off while keeping on a younger employee with less seniority.

If the availability of bilingual services prevents or discourages immigrants from learning English, then this would show up in cities with large immigrant populations. Where there is significant access to bilingual services, demand for adult ESL classes would be low, and vice versa. But this is not the case. In all cities which are magnets for immigrants, bilingual services are widespread, and the demand for ESL instruction usually outstrips the supply.

The argument against bilingual ballots

> We expect all those under the age of fifty seeking naturalization to demonstrate competence in English as a condition of citizenship. However, in 375 jurisdictions in 21 states, the federal government still requires that ballots be printed in languages other than English. How can we require knowledge on the one hand, then turn around and encourage dependency on other languages with the other? (Shumway, 1988)

Efforts to disenfranchize minority members of society have been the scourge of our democratic society. Poll taxes and literacy tests were once instituted to intimidate black voters and discourage them from going to the polls. Immigrants with a minimal knowledge of English were also treated with contempt at voting sites. Federal law protecting the use of bilingual ballots in districts that name significant numbers of nonnative English-speakers with low levels of literacy was passed to eliminate these discriminatory practices.

The test for citizenship in the United States is based on a third- to fourth-grade level of English proficiency. Could a third-grade American child be able to read and understand some of the initiatives that appear on ballots? Some may argue that we need to increase the level of English proficiency required for naturalization. However, we have never made knowledge of English a prerequisite for citizenship. It has never been an issue for immigrants who have been considered "desirable." For instance, during the cold war we gave refuge to scores of Eastern Europeans regardless of their knowledge of English (Martina Navratilova could barely communicate with reporters when she first arrived; it took her years to really master the language).

In addition, we don't require natural citizens to pass a literacy test to prove their patriotism or as a requisite to the right to vote. We value literacy, and we encourage native-born Americans who are illiterate to learn to read and write. We recognize literacy as important for full participation in society and the full realization of personal goals. But we don't demand it as a qualification for citizenship.

Voting in one's native language on one day of the year is unlikely to deter immigrants from learning English; there are many incentives for learning English that far outweigh the ability to conduct some necessary tasks in the native language. It has also been determined that bilingual ballots are most often used by a very specific group. A 1982 study by the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund found that those most likely to use Spanish-language ballots were over 65, had a low level of education, and had low incomes (Avila, 1983). This group would most likely not vote at all if bilingual ballots were not available to them.

Some also complain about the cost of bilingual ballots. Bilingual voting services may sometimes require additional funds. However, it is the mandate of a democracy to give access to the ballot

to as many citizens as possible. Doing so inevitably costs money. Voter registration drives take time and money. Allowing access to voting places to people in wheelchairs takes money. Special provisions for blind voters cost money. Absentee balloting costs money. Inclusion versus exclusion is the desired goal, one which is deemed worth the dollar price.

Bilingualism as the cause of segregation and alienation

> Bilingualism shuts doors. It nourishes self-ghettoization, and ghettoization nourishes racial antagonism. Bilingualism 'encourages concentrations of Hispanics to stay together and not be integrated,' says Alfredo Mathew, Jr., a Hispanic leader, and it may well foster 'a type of apartheid that will generate animosities with others, such as Blacks, in the competition for scarce resources, and further alienate the Hispanic from the larger society.' Using some language other than English dooms people to second-class citizenship in American society (Schlesinger, 1992).

If Schlesinger is really talking about bilingualism here, and not monolingualism in a language other than English, it makes no sense to say that bilingualism alienates. Quite the opposite: It allows the speaker to be able to be part of two speech communities instead of one. More importantly, to argue that language is what segregates and alienates a minority group is ridiculous. The biggest proof of this is the large numbers of African Americans who live alienated from mainstream society, not because of language, but because of institutionalized racism and segregation. We know that housing discrimination is a reality; we know that public education does not treat all children equally; we know that people of color are relegated to second-class status in all areas of life by white society. Here's another argument: If Hispanics wanted to live together, why don't more of them live together in nice, suburban areas rather than inner city ghettos? (Some of course do, partly in order to avoid the racism they know exists.)

It is unconvincing to argue that bilingualism encourages racial animosity between minority groups fighting for scarce resources. If these groups are competing for scarce resources, they will do so whether or not they speak the same language. The true source of this competition is not bilingualism but racism and the unfair distribution of wealth perpetuated by those in power and based to an extent on race and ethnicity.

The double standard of bilingualism

> For the immigrant recently arrived, bilingualism is an uncomfortable, imperfect phase on the way to somewhere else. Knowing and using a different language at home have historically been seen as signs of being 'lower class.' Bilingualism that is valued is the elite variety—full competency in two languages among a small percentage of people for the purpose of scholarly work, diplomacy, foreign trade, or travel (Porter, 1990).

The essential difference between "elite" bilingualism and "folk" bilingualism is one of class: the first being characteristic of those immigrants who are highly educated by the time they come here, the second being a trait of those who are of the lower classes and likely to have a

low level of education. There is no logical reason why folk bilingualism cannot be as useful and positive a characteristic as elite bilingualism. Furthermore, if bilingualism is a positive characteristic, why should it be "transitional" for anyone? And why shouldn't those not yet literate in their first language maintain and gain literacy, thereby becoming elite bilinguals and enjoying the benefits to their social, economic and professional lives (a good argument for maintenance bilingual education)? This double standard also shows up in the differentiation between "foreign languages" and "immigrant" or "minority languages."

The alleged hidden agenda and the inherent failure of bilingual education

> "The bilingual education establishment is fighting to maintain its primacy and prerogative unchallenged, even though bilingual programs have, in the majority of cases, proven unsuccessful....The hidden agenda of the bureaucracy—preserving hispanic language and culture at the price of social integration and advance—is ideological; the political agenda—garnering jobs, power, and community control—is predictably self-serving (Porter, 1990).

The idea that Hispanic leaders are purposely sabotaging the advancement of the Hispanic community is repugnant to many Hispanics. Califa (1991a) reports that in a 1984 study by the National Opinion Research Center, 98% of Hispanics polled agreed that the ability to speak and understand English is an important obligation of United States citizenship. Califa adds, "I know of no Hispanic parents who are upset that their children have learned English....As a Hispanic parent, I find [the] implication that we fail to realize the civic and economic importance of English to be condescending and insulting." He also points out that, despite arguments to the contrary, bilingual education cannot be responsible for Hispanic adult illiteracy because such illiteracy predates the Bilingual Education Act of 1967.

Porter's contention that Hispanic leaders are using bilingual education to preserve the Hispanic language and culture is not born out by the work of the National Association for Bilingual Education. This organization includes many non-Hispanics in its membership and has as its first stated goal "ensuring that language minority students have equal opportunities for learn ing the English language and for succeeding academically" (NABE brochure). Its literature clearly reveals a dedication to bilingualism in general rather than the primacy of Spanish.

It has been the tactic of the official-English movement to dismiss all research showing the positive results of bilingual education by labeling it poorly-done and therefore invalid. Porter does this in the book from which the above quote comes, while also misreporting the results of studies so that they show the alleged benefits of all-English instruction or ignoring the faults of such studies. A more objective review of the literature shows that programs that are really geared to bilingualism are successful in teaching minority-language students English and helping them reach high academic standards. Unfortunately, these programs are few and far between. Fillmore (1992) shows how the educational establishment, which reflects the prejudice against minorities characteristic of society in general, is responsible for setting up bilingual programs that are inadequate and geared to failure. Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (1990) discusses how, worldwide, societies governed by monolingual elites set up educational systems which have monolingualism as the goal. However, language minorities in these societies by necessity must be bilingual. If they are forced

into a monolingual educational setting, either in the majority or in the minority language, they fail academically; if they are allowed to develop high-level bilingualism, they succeed. However, high-level bilingualism is rarely an educational goal for language minorities.

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What individuals can do:

Proactive and Reactive Projects for the Fight against the Official English Movement

by Susan J. Dicker

Proactive Projects

Proponents of official-English have not reached your community yet, but you fear they might. What can you do to make your community resistant to the seductive advances of their arguments? Here are some suggestions for educating yourself and your neighbors, and for encouraging them to think favorably about diversity in all its forms.

- Get the mayor/governor to sign a proclamation declaring your city/state multilingual/multicultural/multiethnic. Get the press to cover the event.
- Sponsor a multilingual/multicultural/multiethnic festival. Include demonstrations of dance, music, art, and literature.

  Lobby for increased funds for adult education, especially for adult ESL education.
- Ask elected officials about their stand on official English. If they are in support of it, tell them why it's a bad idea. If they are against it, support their reelection and tell them that their stand on official-English influenced this support.
- Encourage public and school libraries to buy books in the languages of local minority-language groups.
- Set up exchanges of language-learning lessons (lessons in English in exchange for lessons in other languages). Libraries may be willing to offer space for this. Include adults as well as children.
- Monitor the education of minority-language children in your public schools.
- Lobby for funds for all types of educational programs that encourage bilingualism: maintenance bilingual education, two-way immersion programs, foreign language education. Stress the connection between all these programs.

- Invite the press to visit your ESL/bilingual program.
- Set up town meetings where language issues are discussed. Some possible speakers are:
  - ••Americans who have lived abroad and have had difficulty adjusting to a newculture and language.
  - ••Minority-language speakers who have had difficulty in American schools.
  - ••Successful graduates of bilingual programs, both majority- and minority-language speakers.
- Civil rights and immigration attorneys.
- Become a member of US English to keep informed of their activities and to inform others in your community.

Reactive Projects

US English or other organizations are sending representatives to your community. They begin to show up in different public fora, for example, school board meetings at which bilingual education is discussed. Pro-official-English editorials and articles on the issue appear in local newspapers. It's time to fight back. Perhaps you could:

- Set up a debate with representatives of US English.
- Tape and transcribe the speeches of official-English advocates. Add a rebuttal to the transcripts. Distribute and discuss this material at local town meetings.
- Respond to pro-official-English public statements by writing a letter to the editor or editorial for your local newspaper.
- Poll residents about their opinions on official-English. If they are in favor, ask them what they think the consequences will be; many believe such a law will be merely symbolic and have no real effect on residents.
- Write and talk about the effects of official-English laws that have passed in other states and communities.
- Write and talk about the history of US English, its roots in nativism, and its interest in immigration reform.
- Enlist the aid of organizations likely to be anti-official English: ethnic advocacy groups, civil liberties groups, educators' organizations.
- Set up a letter-writing booth at ESL or other conferences, where participants can sign and send letters to elected officials.

What affiliates can do:

English Language Policy and the Community: Affiliate Response to a Significant Current Issue

by Ruth M. Jackson

One of the ways in which TESOL affiliates can serve their membership effectively is to keep their members informed about pertinent issues that affect them and the ESL/EFL field. One such issue is current legislation at the state and national level that establishes English as the official language. Such an issue affects many aspects of the ESL/EFL field. Holding conferences focused on such issues, putting on workshops providing suggestions for taking action, and inviting guest speakers from TESOL Central Office or from other affiliates are among the actions an affiliate can take to meet the goal of service to its members.

Here are some specific ideas for action at an affiliate conference.

Devote one or two sessions during regional conferences to educating affiliate members on how to be both Pro-active and Re-active.

The PennTESOL East (PTE) affiliate recently did just this. Its 14th Annual PTE Fall Conference on November 12th, 1994, focused on the theme "English Only" presented by Susan J. Dicker. Dicker listed things which ESL/EFL professionals can do both pro-actively (before any law declaring English to be the official language of the community is passed) and re-actively (after the fact) in response to this movement. Among the actions she suggested were pushing for funds for adult ESL education; sponsoring a multicultural/multilingual day; discussing the ramifications of the issue with elected officiaos; setting up a debate on the issue; writing letters to local newspapers; and informing people of the history of US English and its roots in nativism and immigration reform.

Invite noted speakers to address the issue.

TESOL Executive Director, Susan Bayley, gave the plenary address at the November 12th PTE Conference. Bayley spoke on the topic of the "The Future of the ESOL Professional," a topic that complemented the conference theme and that focused on trends in demography, eduction, employment, work and the workplace, as well as on technology and on the ways in which all these trends will directly affect the ESOL profession in the coming years. Among the things she mentioned as impacting on ESL/ESOL teachers were the fallout from "Official English" laws. Bayley also brought the latest buzz from Washington, DC: Legislators in the 1995 US Congress plan to re-introduce one of the five pending bills in hopes of establishing English as the official language of the United States as law. One of the PTE conference speakers, Aida Waserstein, who fled from Cuba as a young girl to live in the United States, made an eloquent plea to conference participants not to let this happen.

Sponsor a Political Action Workshop.

Invite TESOL Director of Field Services Terry O'Donnell or Dr. Susan J. Dicker, for example, to be guest speaker and/or to run a Political Action Workshop for your membership.

Develop a creative ad campaign (1-2 ads) and run it in local newspapers, on a computer network, and in regional professional publications.

Put ESL/EFL teachers' creativity to work developing brief but appealing ads with captions such as "Bilingualism develops the brain."

Encourage letter writing.

Ask members to write and tell their national, state, and local representatives how they would wish them to vote on the issue of official English or English-Only legislation. Affiliates can compile and disseminate names and addresses of elected leaders with an action alert explaining the issue and asking for specific action. The more detailed and easy to use, the higher the likelihood that members will act.

Set up letter writing campaigns and make the correspondence easy to mail.

Staff a desk or booth at regional conferences where attendees can quickly complete a letter that expresses individual views. Have a mailbox or service to a mailbox handy, or arrange for one of the people working the booth to mail correspondence at the end of the day.

Hold a phone–in.

Encourage your membership to make telephone calls. Set up a telephone tree to encourage members to call their elected representatives' offices to convey their views personally. Affiliates can make the necessary phone numbers readily available.

Encourage colleagues, friends, and family—wherever they live—to write or to call their elected representatives and to express their opinions.

Invite area legislators to attend a regional conference.

Ask elected representatives to speak or to be available to take questions. Arrange for them to serve on panels or in discussion groups to make the educational process two-way.

Arrange tours of IEP, LEP, Adult Education, and other bilingual sites for area legislators.

Host a "Bilingual ESL Community Day" and invite lawmakers from governors to mayors to take part.

Disseminate reading lists of materials on the issue of "Official English" and then hold discussion groups to talk over the pros and cons of the subject.

By the end of the day at the PTE Fall Conference, many participants were energized to take action on the issue of Official English and requested that further information be made available to them so that they would be better informed. They made it clear that they wanted to know how to contact their legislators easily—on both the state and national levels—to express their opinions. Their very local expressions of willingness to act indicated that they had been inspired to action, an extremely gratifying phenomenon to the conference planners and a sure sign that the affiliate had served its members well.

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Reading List on "Official English"

compiled by Kathy Romstedt

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